(a) whether Government are aware that the Thai Naval Forces have arrested four Indian nationals and six Myanmar nationals in the Indian territorial waters near Andaman and Nicobar sea and handed them over to the police in Ranong province of South Thailand; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government to get them released?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) Yes, Sir. The nationality of the arrested persons is being ascertained; and

(b) The Government are actively pursuing the matter with the Government of Thailand and the arrested persons are still in Ranong jail. Investigations by the Thai authorities are still underway.

Discrimination against Indians in Recruitment in Gulf Countries

4280. SHRI M.A. BABY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the stringent restrictions and regulations introduced by some Gulf countries in recruiting people of Indian origin for employment in their respective countries; if so, the details thereof; and

(b) the steps being taken or contemplated, to negotiate with those countries the matter of avoidance of discrimination in the recruitment on the basis of religion?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) and (b) Government of India is not aware of any stringent restrictions and regulations introduced by any of the gulf countries directed at recruiting people of Indian origin for employment in their respective countries. Indian citizens constitute largest expetriate groups in most of the gulf countries.

Whenever specific instances of discrimination in the recruitment on the basis of religion in recruiting Indian nationals, are brought to the attention of the government, the matter is taken up with respective governments with a view to bring such practices to an end.

Arms for Insurgents in North-East From Thailand

4281. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the militant groups in North-East India are getting arms supplies from Thailand;

(b) whether Government have taken up the issue with the Thai Government; and

(c) if so, the Thai response in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) to (c) The Government are aware of the misuse of the territory of Thailand by some insurgent groups operating in the North-East of India. The Government of Thailand have been duly sensitised to our concerns and have been requested to prevent the various insurgent groups from procuring weapons from Thailand. The Government of Thailand have conveyed that they fully share our concerns, and have assured us of their full cooperation in assisting in curbing and containing the activities of undersirable elements on their territory.

Indo-Russian Defence Cooperation

4282. DR. MOHAN BABU:
SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Russia has invited India to plan defence cooperation between the two countries beyond the year 2000;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and